



State Superintendent
Elizabeth Burmaster

A Message from the State Superintendent

This 2004 State Improvement Plan (SIP) Executive Summary documents our final results in meeting the vision and goals of our five-year State improvement plan for children with disabilities. These results demonstrate that by working together toward a common vision we can help our children with disabilities achieve academically and become caring, contributing, productive, and responsible citizens. While we have much to be proud of, this final summary addresses areas where our continual leadership, advocacy, and accountability are needed if we are to ensure our "New Wisconsin Promise" of a quality education for every child.

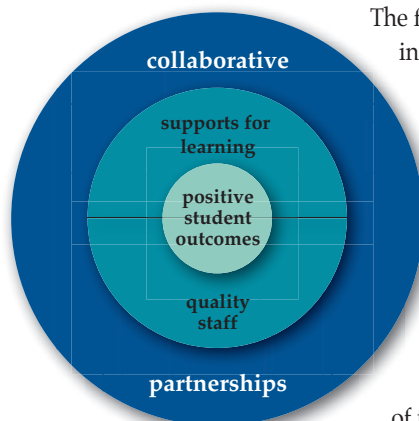
As we design and develop future improvement plans, we will continue to focus on high expectations guaranteeing success for all children, including children with disabilities.

FIVE-YEAR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1999-2004



STATE Improvement Plan *For Children with Disabilities*

Measuring Success



The five-year State Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed in 1999-2000 and represents the shared vision of how to improve the outcomes for children with disabilities in Wisconsin. Over the past five years, the plan has functioned within the broader context of the department's mission to ensure the opportunity of a quality education for every child, which is the foundation of the "New Wisconsin Promise." One of the ways for us to accomplish

our New Wisconsin Promise for students with disabilities and their families is through the SIP, which has become the vehicle for planning and providing statewide direction and leadership in the education of children with disabilities. The overall vision for our five-year SIP has been to "prepare students with disabilities for postsecondary education or satisfying employment, and a level of independent living that is uniquely appropriate for each individual."

This SIP vision has continued to represent a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy that was developed by caring families, hardworking students, concerned community members, and dedicated educators within our state. Our state's SIP has provided valuable support in helping Wisconsin meet the standards and regulations found in the federal legislation included in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 and the Individuals with Disability Education Act which was reauthorized in 2004.

The SIP centered on four goals that have been identified as those that would help us meet national, as well as state, educational reform efforts and our shared vision.

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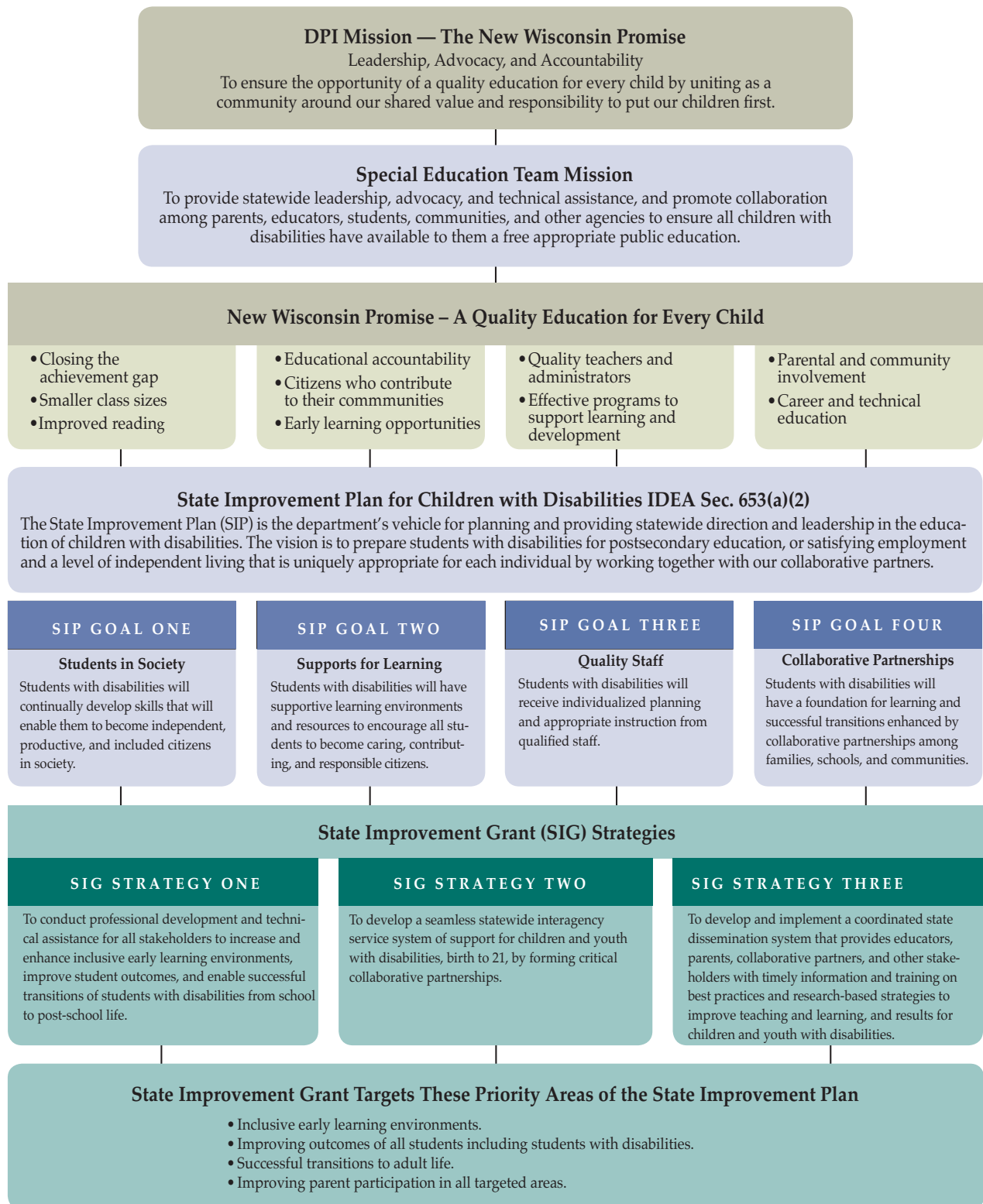
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Mission



Measuring Success (cont'd)

The four goals are:

1. Students with disabilities will continually develop skills that will enable them to become independent, productive, and included citizens in society.
2. Students with disabilities will have supportive learning environments and resources to encourage all students to become caring, contributing, and responsible citizens.
3. Students with disabilities will receive individualized planning and appropriate instruction from qualified staff.
4. Students with disabilities will have a foundation for learning and successful transitions enhanced by collaborative partnerships among families, schools, and communities.

These goals are listed under the specific headings of: Students in our Society, Supports for Learning, Quality Staff, and Collaborative

Partnerships. Over the last five years, the SIP Executive Summary has been used as a guide to measure our state's efforts in implementing improvement strategies for increasing state and local capacity to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and in meeting our four SIP goals.

The 2004 Executive Summary is the department's final document which brings together the last five years of data and provides readers the opportunity to reflect on how well we did in meeting our SIP goals and objectives. In addition, the summary provides us the opportunity to review the data and information we need to know in order for us to plan and design further improvement strategies to meet our vision for students with disabilities (see back cover for "Next Steps"). The Department of Public Instruction looks forward to continuing to work with parents, district staff, students, and communities as we look for ways to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities, thereby ensuring the opportunity for a quality education for every child.

State Improvement Grant (SIG) Highlights 2004

While the SIP has been the state's vehicle for planning and providing statewide direction and leadership in the education of children with disabilities, the State Improvement Grant (SIG) continues to be the crucial funding mechanism helping us carry out the plan. As a five-year system change initiative, the SIG continues to bring together educational leaders, school staff, parents, and community members around the vision to improve the outcomes for children with disabilities.

Wisconsin's SIG has supported the efforts of the DPI and the 90+ collaborative partners, including parents, school and community members, institutes of higher education, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), and other agencies to reform and improve state systems that provide services in the areas of early childhood intervention, PK-12 education, and transition services. Because SIG is a systemic change initiative, activities are designed to continue to strengthen and build statewide infrastructure and are grounded in the work of our 23 grant projects (for a list of projects see the SIG website listed at the end of this article). In addition, these 23 grant projects focus their work on meeting these five-year outcomes:

- Young children with disabilities, birth through 5, will receive special education and related services in age appropriate general education settings including home, child care, preschools, Head Start, 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten, and community play-

groups that are staffed by a qualified workforce of regular and special educators working collaboratively with each other and with families.

- All students, including students with disabilities, will meet challenging academic and behavior standards through improved quality of educational services and collaborations among professionals and parents.
- Students with disabilities will have post-high school plans which would include activities such as postsecondary education, vocational training, employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

SIG partners continue to use professional development, dissemination of best practices, and collaboration as strategies to reach the SIG goals. During the 2004-05 grant year, SIG provided over 40 different collaborative events involving the SIG partners. SIG was able to provide a variety of professional development as well as technical assistance activities including presentations at state and national conferences. The result is that over the last three years, SIG has successfully disseminated many different types of materials including brochures, guides, surveys, training packages (in English and Spanish), toolkits, and video-streaming. For more information on the SIG initiative, or to access these materials, please visit the SIG website at wisconsinsig.org.

Wisconsin's Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS)

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has focused attention on improving outcomes for all students. This law holds schools accountable for student progress using indicators of adequate yearly progress (AYP), including measures of academic performance and rates of school completion. Like NCLB, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 places greater emphasis on improving results for children with disabilities. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is responsible for ensuring the requirements of IDEA 2004 are carried out within the state and for providing general supervision of public educational programs for children with disabilities. Over the last five years, DPI's oversight of local educational agencies (LEAs) has evolved to become a continuous improvement system that is data-based and focused on student results. DPI accomplishes its general supervision of LEAs through a Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS).

A key principle of an effective CIFMS is input and feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders composed of parents of children with disabilities, educators, and advocates for children with disabilities. The CIFMS stakeholders analyze statewide student outcome data to determine the focused monitoring priority areas

in Wisconsin. Current CIFMS priorities are reducing the gap in graduation rates between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, and reducing the gap in 8th grade reading performance as measured by the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) statewide assessment. Minutes from the CIFMS stakeholder meetings, as well as a listing of the current CIFMS stakeholders, may be found on the DPI website at dpi.wi.gov/sped/cifms.html.

DPI uses student outcome data to identify LEAs in need of improvement in the priority areas and conducts focused monitoring visits to those districts. On site activities include focus forums and interviews with parents, students, and district staff and a review of policies and practices that pertain to the priority areas. Feedback from parents, students, and staff who have participated in focused monitoring visits by DPI the last two school years has been very positive. Focused monitoring is designed to impact educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities positively, while ensuring that LEAs meet state and federal requirements under IDEA 2004. To learn more about CIFMS, visit the DPI website at dpi.wi.gov/sped/hmcimp.html.

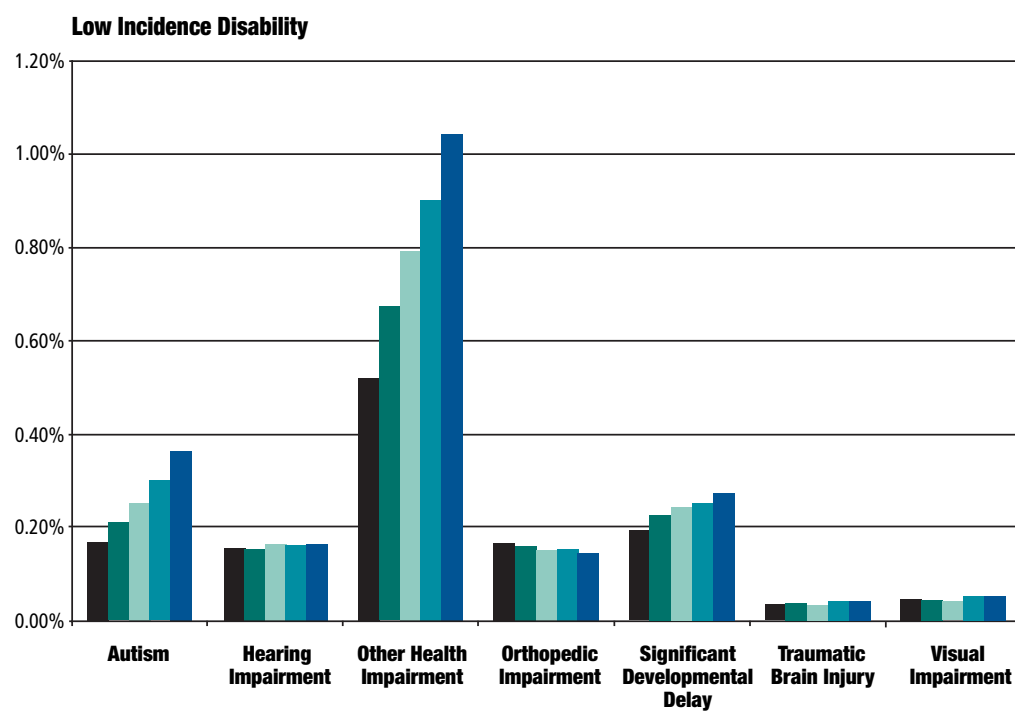
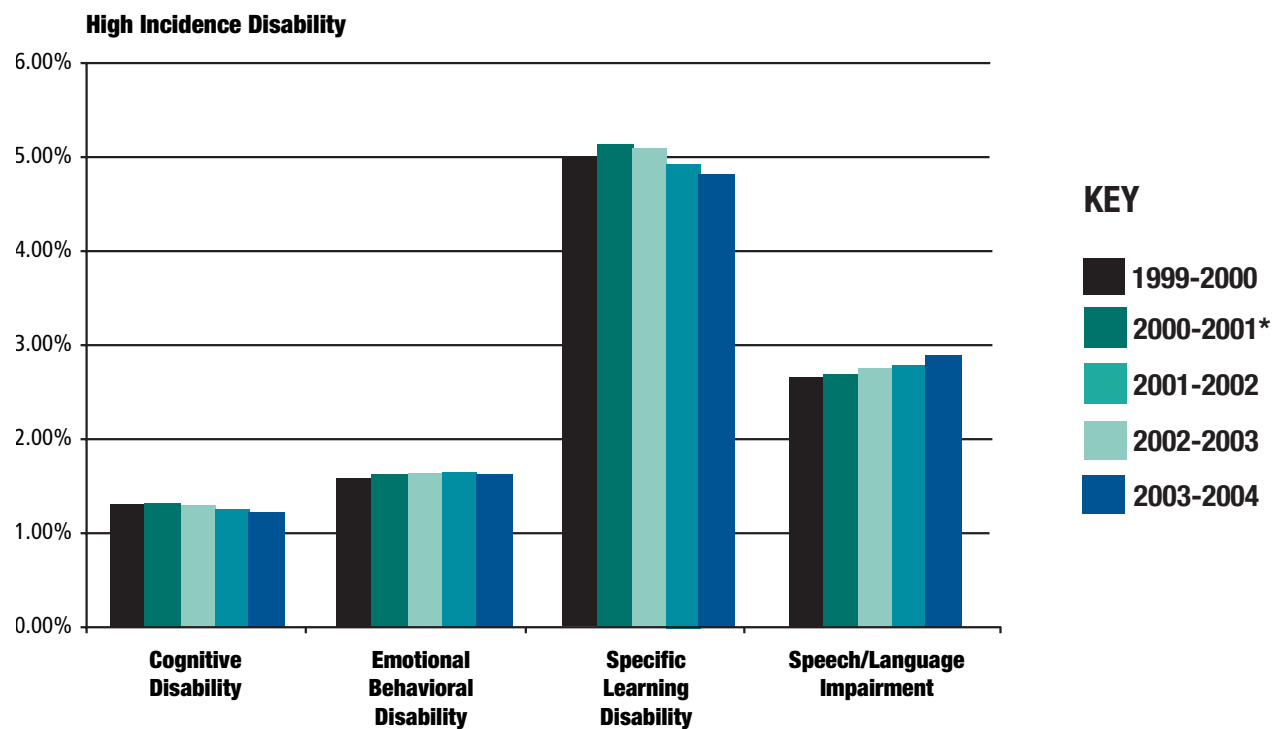
Prevalence of Disabilities

Prevalence represents the percentage of the district-enrolled children identified with a particular disability. Prevalence is determined by dividing the number of students identified by primary disability by the total public/non-public enrollment for the district. The overall prevalence rate of students with disabilities as reported on the December 1, 2003, Child Count was 12.6%.

As you can see from the charts on the following page, over the past five years the prevalence rate continues to increase in Wisconsin, going from a rate of 11.8% in 1999-2000 to the most current rate of 12.6%. Wisconsin, however, is still at a lower rate than the national rate of 13.4%. At both the national and state level, the areas identified as impacting the increased rates of prevalence are autism and other health impairment. And while nationally and in Wisconsin

this increase might be viewed in a negative way, we believe here in Wisconsin this increase is a direct result of early identification and progress we have made in providing services to meet the needs of younger children much sooner.

As we continue to look at the five years of prevalence data it is important to note the decrease Wisconsin has seen in the prevalence rate of students with specific learning disabilities. As districts promote and expand the ideas behind early and ongoing collaboration and problem-solving among regular education, special education, and parents, state and local educational leaders are able to continue to assist students at risk of failure while in regular education who might otherwise have been referred for special education.



*In 2000-2001, the DPI started counting students from the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services.

Goal 1:

Students in Society

Students with disabilities will continually develop skills that will enable them to become independent, productive, and included citizens in society.

Objectives

1.1 The percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the general education curriculum and statewide standardized assessments will increase.

1.2 The percentage of students with disabilities who score at the proficient or advanced performance level on standardized statewide assessments will increase.

1.3 The quality of education will improve so all students will meet high standards for academic performance and personal behavior, thus reducing referral rates for special education.

1.4 The percentage of students with disabilities who exit high school with a diploma will increase.

1.5 The percentage of students with disabilities who are employed or participating in postsecondary education three years after leaving high school will increase.

1.6 The percentage of students with disabilities who are living independently or in assisted living arrangements three years after leaving high school will increase.

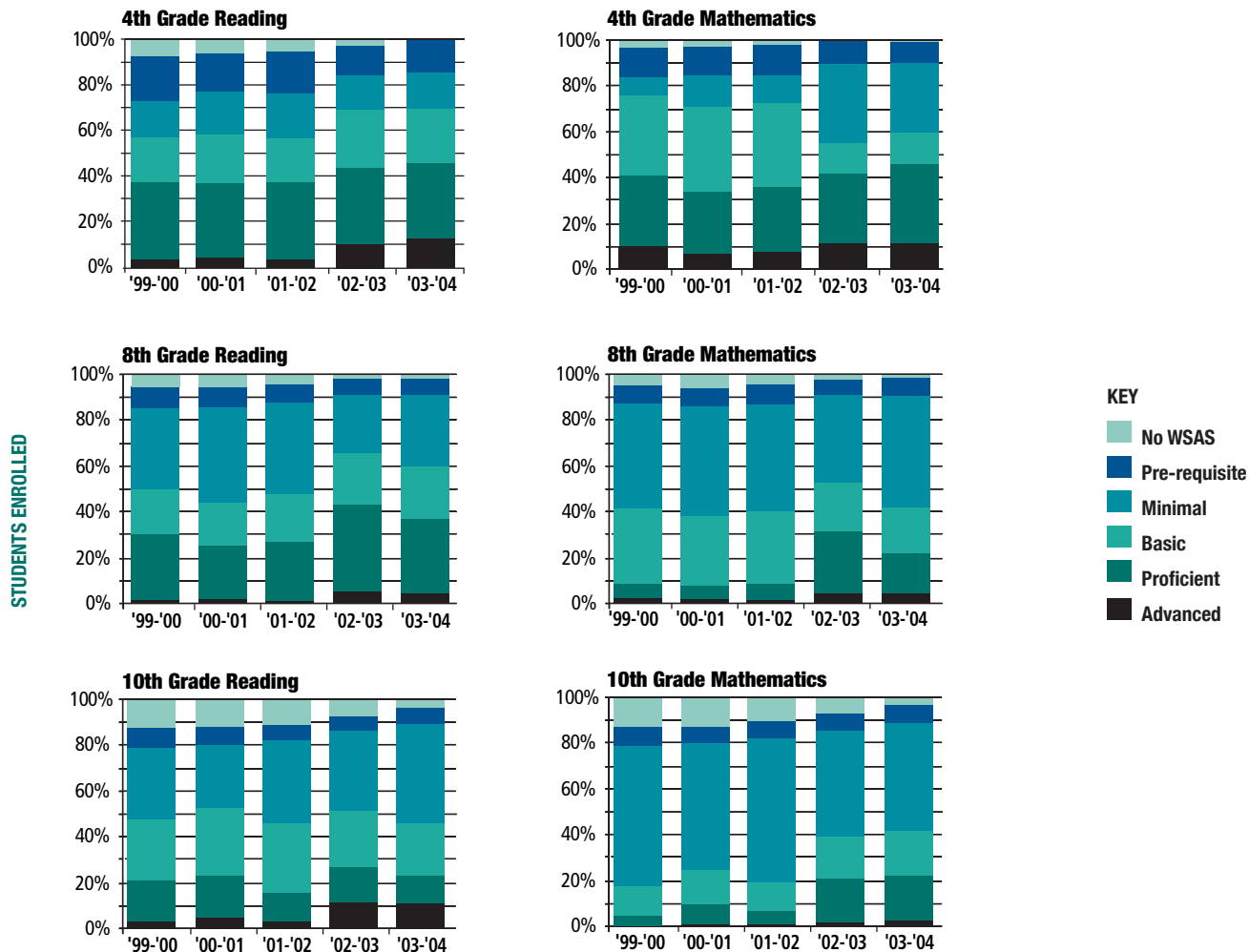
Statewide Assessment Data: Five-Year Comparison 2000-01 to 2004-05

Addressing Objectives 1.1 and 1.2

Students with Disabilities and Statewide Assessment

All students with disabilities are required to participate in state and district assessments. Since 1997, IDEA continues to require that “children with disabilities be included in general state and district-wide assessment programs with accommodations, where necessary.” NCLB further requires states to implement statewide accountability systems ensuring all students, including students with disabilities, be proficient in math and reading by 2013-14. In addition, NCLB requires LEAs to measure and report on the progress of all students and subgroups of students including by race/ethnicity, children with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, and limited-English proficient. Over the past four years, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster has focused the work of DPI around the New Wisconsin Promise (NWP) and a pledge to put our children and their education first. Included in the NWP are goals specific to student achievement, educational accountability, improved reading, and post-school success in becoming actively involved citizens. Over the past four years, the number of students with disabilities who participate in statewide assessments has increased. To assist LEAs, since 1999 the department has offered staff development to teachers, administrative staff, and parents around assessment guidelines and accommodations, alternate assessment, and explicit instruction on how to conduct the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment (WAA) for students with disabilities whose performance cannot be measured meaningfully using the WKCE. The Educational Assessment and Accountability for all Students was published and updated. The Administrative Guidebook for the Wisconsin Assessment for Students with Disabilities was developed and revised. An accommodation matrix was developed to assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to determine appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about the WAA, please access the Special Education team website at dpi.wi.gov/sped/assmt-waa.html.

Progress of Students With Disabilities on WKCE Tests from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004



Academic Progress:

Using the data collected from the 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 WKCE, the graphs above indicate the performance levels of students with disabilities. In addition to achievement scores, the data also indicates the percent of students with disabilities who did not participate. This data indicates growth in not only the numbers of students with disabilities taking the WKCE, but also an increase in the percent of students with disabilities scoring at the proficient and advanced levels. To obtain more information

on how students with disabilities compare in achievement to their non-disabled peers, please access the Wisconsin's Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website at data.dpi.state.wi.us/data/selschool.asp.

While there is an achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, our progress in closing this gap continues to move in a very positive direction.

Early and Ongoing Collaboration and Assistance (EOCA) Initiative

Addressing Objective 1.3

True to its progressive tradition, Wisconsin has responded with vitality and initiative to the call for improving education in our schools. We have reexamined many of our traditional programs, policies, and procedures. This process is reflected in the New Wisconsin Promise that is our pledge to “ensure the opportunity of a quality education for every child.” By promoting proactive collaborative planning, instruction, and assessment within schools, we will support learning and development for all students while preventing and reducing barriers to student success. By helping schools build exciting and challenging programs that are creative and diverse, we will live up to our promise. The EOCA initiative is an important vehicle for fulfilling the New Wisconsin Promise. EOCA provides the leadership, coordination, and technical assistance designed to help education communities increase the use, variety, and quality of instructional options, professional development, and parent/community involvement. The EOCA initiative incorporates elements needed to implement “coordinated early intervening services” and documentation of “response to instruction” set forth by IDEA 2004.

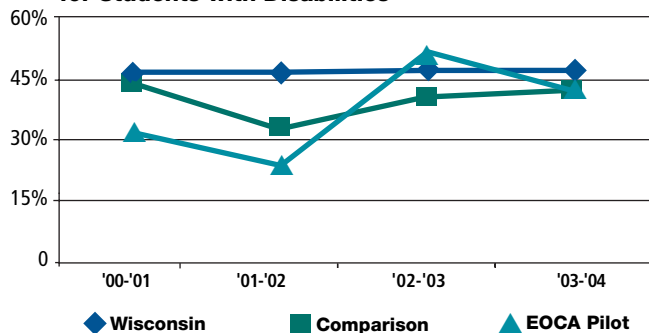
EOCA began during the 2001-2002 school year as a statewide system change initiative directed at enhancing the success of all students while preventing student failure. The initiative has provided a research-based framework and ongoing professional development, technical assistance, and expert school-level support needed to help schools implement the framework. Over a three- to five-year period, schools implementing the framework develop the means to provide high quality evidence-based educational options for students that are more likely to be sustained over time.

Outside evaluation of the initiative has yielded a number of promising results for schools implementing the framework during 2001-2004. For example, evaluation findings indicate improved achievement of students, particularly students with disabilities. Yet, the findings also clearly indicate that our work is not finished. Special education referrals and prevalence continue to be higher than the state average in schools implementing the EOCA framework, although factors associated with high incidence rates (e.g., high proportions of economically disadvantaged students) were also higher than the state rates. Referral rates seem to be stabilizing in schools who have participated for three years. This finding calls for an intensified effort to increase the number and effectiveness of general education options made available to students and supports made available to staff and parents that stop a pattern of failure from occurring before special education referral is considered.

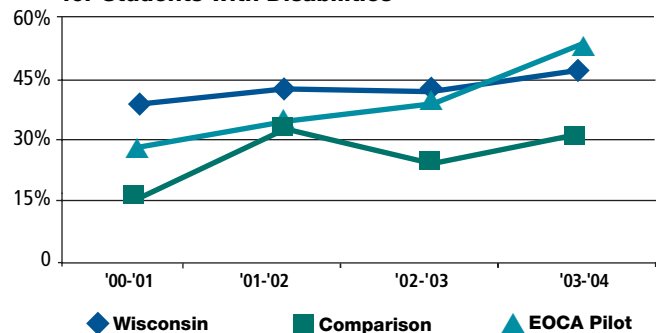
EOCA evaluation findings years 2000-2004 include:

- Increased implementation of structures and practices associated with highly effective schools; in particular, commitment to the EOCA vision, strong leadership, and the establishment of an environment of collaboration.
- More frequent implementation and monitoring of targeted interventions that reduced student concerns as schools implement the framework for longer periods of time. Only 30% of students receiving targeted interventions were referred for a special education evaluation during the 2003-2004 school year.
- Increased parent involvement as schools implement the framework for longer periods of time.
- Stabilized special education referral rates in schools implementing the framework for three years.
- Habitual truancy rates were lower for elementary students than in comparison schools. Habitual truancy rates among K-5 Hispanic students declined from 13% in 2001-02 to 8% in 2003-04.
- Suspension rates for African American elementary students in EOCA schools declined to a rate of approximately half the state rate in 2003-04.
- Third-year EOCA pilot schools consistently achieved higher proficiency rates in reading and math than comparison schools. Non-white 4th grade students in EOCA pilot schools achieved slightly higher reading and math proficiency rates than those from the comparison schools. Reading and math achievement in 4th grade students with disabilities increased at a higher rate than those of comparison schools or the state average. After three years, 4th grade students with disabilities in schools implementing the EOCA framework outperformed those from comparison schools in math.
- Achievement gaps between economically advantaged and disadvantaged 4th grade students narrowed substantially between 2002-03 and 2003-04, with proficiency rate differences dropping from 25% to 14% in reading and from 24% to 17% in math. The achievement gap between white and non-white students in EOCA pilot schools also narrowed. Reading proficiency rate differences between 4th grade white and non-white students decreased from 36% and 23% in 2001-02 and 2002-03, respectively, to a difference of 13.4% in 2003-04. Fourth grade math proficiency rates in EOCA pilot schools followed a similar trend, dropping from differences of 39% in 2001-02 to 19% in 2003-04. eocaschools.org

4th Grade Reading Proficiency Rates for Students with Disabilities



4th Grade Math Proficiency Rates for Students with Disabilities



Reading Excellence and Demonstration of Success Initiative (READS)

Addressing Objective 1.3

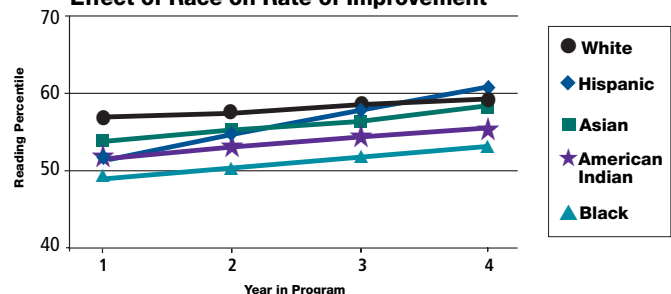
The purpose of this statewide initiative is to provide grants to LEAs to enhance the use of comprehensive, evidence-based literacy instruction with all students with a particular emphasis on reducing achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and students with disabilities and their peers.

Participating districts cultivate a commitment to READS goals through the use of broad-based leadership teams committed to assisting with the coordination and evaluation of READS activities. Schools use READS funds to increase the capacity of staff to provide evidence-based instruction to all students and to implement progress monitoring systems that provide a critical link to adjust instruction to meet student needs. READS schools clearly recognize that a menu of instructional programs and strategies are needed in order to realize high levels of student literacy. To this end, participating schools use READS funds to increase universal, selected, and targeted literacy instruction and intervention options made available to students.

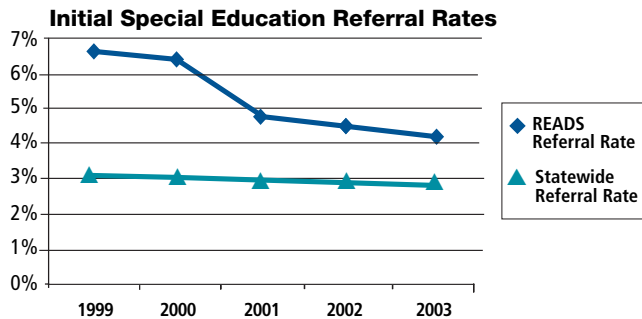
When Learning Point Associates evaluated the READS initiative from 1999-2003 they reported that READS helped teachers become better literacy educators, improved students' reading comprehension skills, improved students' writing skills, and helped improve students' phonics skills. Learning Point Associates' evaluation also pointed out that there was small but steady overall reading growth

in READS schools. Students whose teachers participated in READS activities made an average gain of one normal curve equivalent (NCE) point per year over the state average, and increased their reading level from the 57th national percentile to the 61st percentile. More over, 72% of students included in the analysis improved relative to their peers. Perhaps the most significant impact of READS has been in the steadily declining referral rates for special education. Many of these positive outcomes are seen in the charts below. For more information of this initiative, please access the Special Education website dpi.wi.gov/reads/index.html.

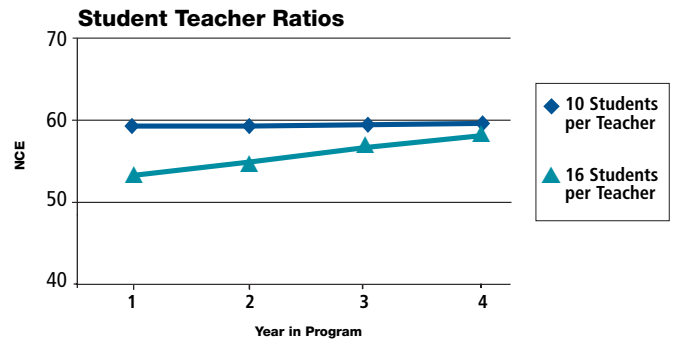
Effect of Race on Rate of Improvement



All demographic groups improved over time. Hispanic students show the greatest proportional gains. The gap between Hispanic and white student performance was eliminated.



Special Education referral rates have steadily declined in READS schools



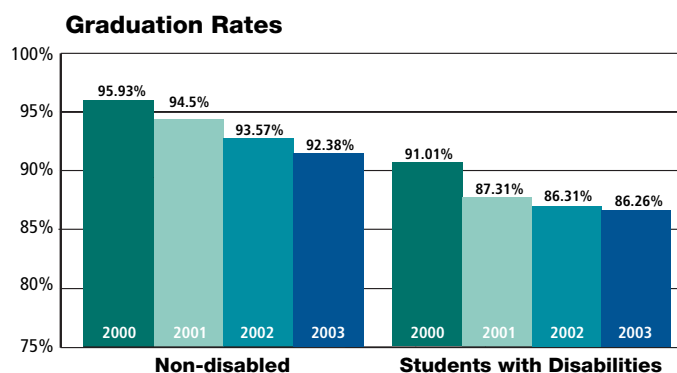
Over time, READS resources helped schools close the performance gap between classes with higher and lower student to teacher ratios

Graduation Rates

Addressing Objective 1-4

A central goal of IDEA is to improve the academic and post-school outcomes of children with disabilities. Indeed, completing high school represents a key milestone in an individual's schooling and social and economic advancements. While there is room for improvement, Wisconsin graduation rate for students with disabilities ranks significantly higher than the national average. In 2001, Wisconsin's graduation rate for all students was 94.5 percent with an 87.3 percent graduation rate for students with disabilities. Initiatives to support improving graduation rates include the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative and the Wisconsin Post High School Outcomes Survey.

In Wisconsin, students who are deaf or hard of hearing have one of the highest rates of graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and employment rates of students with disabilities. However, these students too often dropout of postsecondary programs due to lack of effective support service and are under-employed. Activities that support effective transition planning have been a topic of discussion and focus for teachers in the more rural areas of the state and is a focus of the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative. The Wisconsin School for the Deaf has operated a summer program open to all students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This program has supported youth leadership, language development, self-esteem building, self-advocacy skills, and awareness of resources statewide and nationwide for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.



Post secondary Education, Employment, and Independent Living: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

Addressing Objectives 1.5 and 1.6

In 2000, DPI contracted with CESA 11 to develop the Wisconsin Post High School Outcomes Survey (WPHOS). This study assessed the outcomes of a representative sample of students with disabilities who successfully exited high school in Wisconsin. Students were contacted by telephone and asked about their participation in independent living activities, postsecondary education and employment, one, three, and five years after exiting high school. During years one, three, and five of the study, a statewide survey was conducted. During the even years of the study, local educational agencies surveyed their own students. Full reports for each survey year may be viewed at dpi.wi.gov/sped/posthigh.html including longitudinal results for Year 1 exiters. A summary of the statewide survey results are highlighted below and represent outcomes for each group of students one year after exiting high school. Year 1 outcome data was collected on students with disabilities who exited high schools in Wisconsin between December 1999 and December 2000. Year 3 outcome data was collected on students with disabilities who exited high schools in Wisconsin between December 2001 and December 2002, and Year 5 on students with disabilities who exited between December 2003 and December 2004.

Positive trends have emerged over the five-year study. A higher percentage of young adults with disabilities are living independently one year after exiting high school (fewer are living with their parents and almost twice as many report living with a spouse or roommate). Year 1 results show 21% live independently compared to Year 5 results of 35%. Nationally, 23% live independently within one year of exiting high school. In addition, more students with disabilities are attending postsecondary education (from 47 to 48%) compared to only 32% nationally. The biggest increases noted are attendance at a 2-year or 4-year college or university (from 23% to 29%) and at a technical college (from 28% to 33%). Students continue to participate in more than one type of postsecondary education.

An area that DPI will continue to monitor is the area of employment as slightly fewer youth with disabilities are employed one year after exiting high school (from 80% to 72%). This decline may coincide with an overall weaker economy; however, Wisconsin continues to rank above the national average of students with disabilities employed one year after exiting high school.

Outcomes of Students with Disabilities: One Year After Exiting High School

Students living independently:

Year 1 = 21%

Year 3 = 34%

Year 5 = 35%

NLTS2* = 23%

Students living with parents:

Year 1 = 76%

Year 3 = 63%

Year 5 = 63%

Attend postsecondary school:

Year 1 = 47%

Year 3 = 45%

Year 5 = 48%

NLTS2* = 32%

2 or 4 Year College:

Year 1 = 23%

Year 3 = 21%

Year 5 = 29%

Technical College:

Year 1 = 28%

Year 3 = 27%

Year 5 = 33%

Paid employment:

Year 1 = 80%

Year 3 = 74%

Year 5 = 72%

NLTS2* = 32%

Salary above \$8.00 per Hour:

Year 1 = 57%

Year 3 = 43%

Year 5 = 48%

* = National Longitudinal Transition Study 2; see nlts2.org

Goal 2:

Supports for Learning

Students with disabilities will have supportive learning environments and resources to encourage all students to become caring, contributing, and responsible citizens.

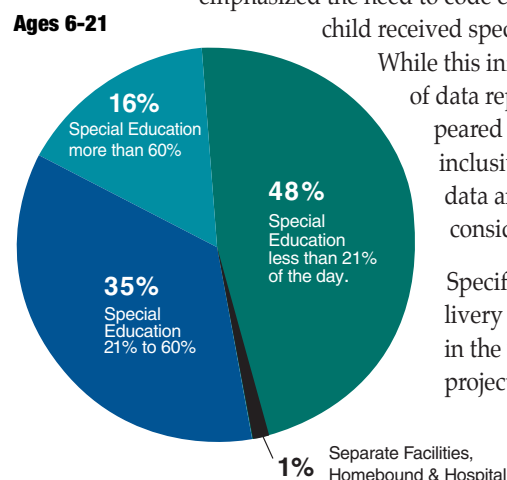
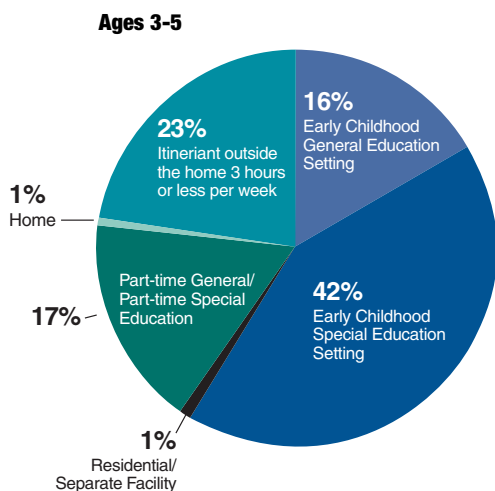
Objectives

2.1 The percentage of preschoolers with disabilities who receive special education and related services in inclusive settings will increase.

2.2 The percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the regular education environment with supplementary aids and services to the maximum extent appropriate as determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will increase.

2.3 The percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school will decrease.

2.4 The number of students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled will decrease.



Educational Environments

Addressing Objectives 2.1 and 2.2

Educational Environment December 2003

State counts of students ages 3 through 21 receiving special education and related services under IDEA are collected on December 1 of each year, according to the educational environment in which these services were received. Data on educational environments provides a measure of the extent to which students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers. Data for children ages 3 through 5 are collected by individual age, disability, and race/ethnicity. For children ages 6 through 21, counts are collected by age group (6-11, 12-17, 18-21), disability, and race/ethnicity.

2003-2004 Educational Environment Data:

- Data at the school-age level (ages 6-21) represents an increase from 45% to 48% for students being served outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day.
- Data at the early childhood level (3-5) represents a decrease from 27% to 16% for children served in general education settings; an increase from 7% to 17% for children served in part-time general and part-time special education; and children remains at 42% served in special education settings.

Beginning in 2003, specific training was provided to clarify the application of code information for young children receiving special education and related services. Prior to this time, children were reported in the code matching their enrollment. The training emphasized the need to code environments based on "where the child received special education and related services."

While this information increased the accuracy of data reported, it provided data that appeared to reduce the number of children in inclusive settings. It is suggested that the data and trend be interpreted with this consideration.

Specific training to expand preschool delivery of service is a DPI priority reflected in the SIG and several discretionary grant projects.

In November 2004, the DPI provided statewide training to increase understanding of the educational environment codes. The training stressed the importance of data accuracy. Variance in data in subsequent data collections may be a factor of more accurate reporting of the educational environments at both early childhood and school-age levels.

Dropout Rates

Addressing Objective 2.3

In Wisconsin, a dropout is defined as a student who was enrolled in school at some time during the reported school year, was not enrolled at the beginning of the following school year (third Friday in September), has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved educational program, and does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved educational program; temporary absence due to expulsion, suspension, or school-approved illness; and death. Dropouts are reported for grades 7 through 12.

The dropout rate for students with disabilities in Wisconsin continues to decrease over time while the rate for students without disabilities increased slightly during 2002-03. Dropout rates continue to vary by disability category, with the highest rate occurring

for students with emotional behavioral disabilities and the lowest rate for students with autism. Over the course of the next few years, DPI, along with Office of Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education (OSEP), will continue to closely monitor this rate and focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. High expectations for all students include the expectation for all students to graduate from high school.

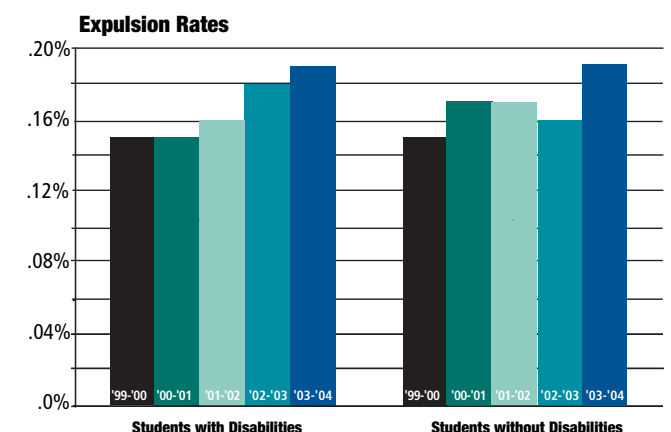
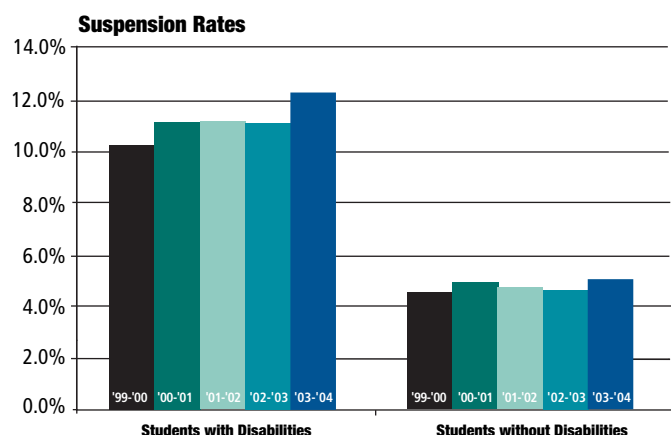
Year	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
2002-2003	2.24	1.94
2001-2002	2.53	1.85
2000-2001	2.94	2.01
1999-2000	2.66	2.25

Suspension and Expulsion Rates

Addressing Objective 2.4

Effective behavior management is considered an essential ingredient of effective schools and teaching, but is a challenge for many American schools (Bos & Vaughn, 1994; Leone et al., 2000). While most incidents of school misconduct can be addressed through processes like parent conferences, behavior contracts, and behavior plans, when behaviors or events are considered serious violations most schools use the mechanisms of suspension and, in extreme cases, expulsion. In the case of students with disabilities, there has been a long-standing tension between the numbers of students with disabilities being suspended and expelled as compared to their non-disabled peers. This is only compounded by the fact that it is a school's responsibility to maintain school safety and discipline as well as protect student's right to free appropriate public education under IDEA.

In Wisconsin, the expulsion rate for students with disabilities is determined by dividing the number of students with disabilities who were expelled as reported on the School Performance Report by the total number of students with disabilities attending the school district as reported on the December 1 Federal Child Count expressed as a percentage. The suspension rate for students without disabilities is determined in the same manner. Like most other states, the gap in rates of suspension and expulsion between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers continues to increase. The suspension rate for students with disabilities continues to be more than twice the rate for students without disabilities. In addition to this suspension rate, the expulsion rate for students with disabilities is higher and continues to rise slightly more than the rate of their non-disabled peers. Department initiatives in this



area include the Behavior grant and EOCA. Pilot schools using the EOCA model have documented fewer behavior concerns and a marked decline in suspension rates.

Goal 3:

Quality Staff

Students with disabilities will receive individualized planning and appropriate instruction from qualified staff.

Objectives

3.1 The number of special education teachers and related service personnel in disability areas of greatest need will increase.

3.2 The knowledge and skills of regular and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and administrators to improve educational results for children with disabilities will increase.

3.3 In cooperation with special education teachers, training for paraprofessionals involved in the provision of services for students with disabilities will increase.

3.4 The number of school district special education staff that participate in Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) statewide data retreats will increase.

3.5 The knowledge of state special education eligibility criteria and proper application will increase.

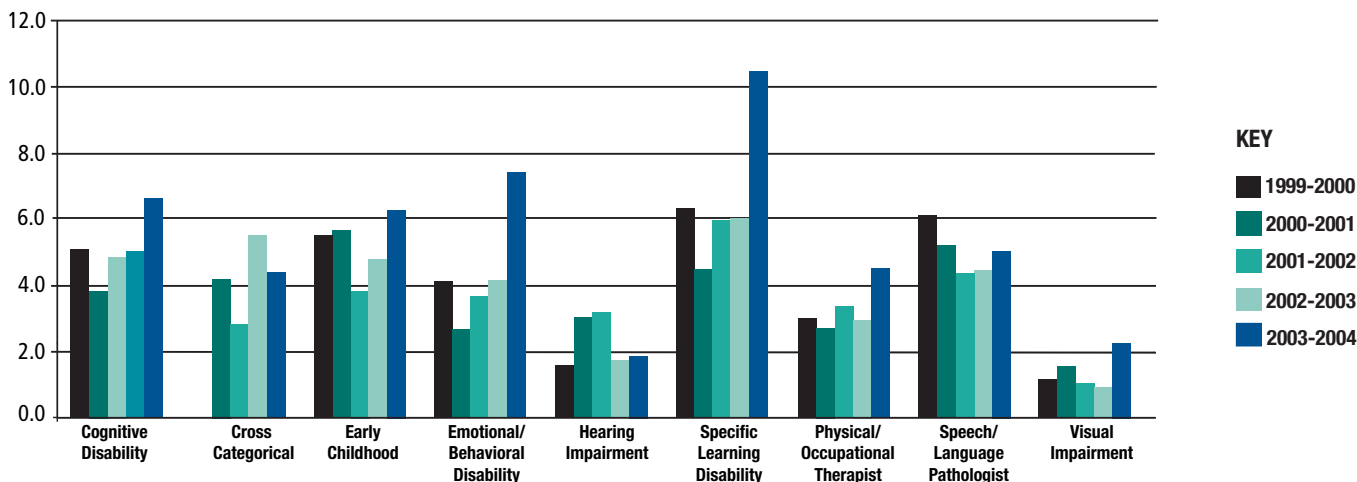
Qualified Staff

Addressing Objective 3.1

In spite of Wisconsin's continued priority to train adequate numbers of qualified education staff, Wisconsin continues to experience shortages in special education. While the number of emergency licenses decreased overall in 2004, a greater percent of those issued were in the area of special education. In 2004, the department issued a total of 2,490 emergency licenses, of which 1,233 (49.5%) were in special education. This was an increase of 5% from 2003. The chart on the following page shows the number of emergency licenses issued in each of the specific areas for the past five years. Approximately 61% of the special education emergency licenses issued in 2004 continue to be issued in the areas of emotional behavioral disorders and specific learning disabilities. This represents a slight decrease from 2003 when 67% of the total emergency licenses issued were in these two areas alone.

In looking at the ratio of applicants to vacancies, subject areas with a higher number of applicants per vacancy are more likely to be in oversupply. Areas with fewer applicants per vacancy are more likely to be in under supply, or short supply. The ratio of applicants to vacancies is calculated by dividing the number of applicants by the number of vacancies. The bar graph below illustrates the ratio of applicants to vacancies since 1999 for each of the areas in special education. The 2004 data indicates the shortest supply of applicants continues to be in the areas of hearing impairment and visual impairment. While current data continues to support previous years' trends, it is noteworthy that the ratio in these two areas has decreased slightly, indicating a greater supply of applicants (i.e., 1.82 and 2.20 respectively in 2004 compared to 1.67 and 0.91 respectively in 2003).

Ratio of Applicants to Vacancies



Goal of Qualified Education Staff

Addressing Objective 3.2

The mission of the DPI is to safeguard every child's right to a quality education by ensuring that Wisconsin's teachers are highly qualified and prepared to meet the needs of all students. New program approval standards within Chapter PI 34 took effect on July 1, 2000. This new system is based on the Wisconsin Standards with demonstrated knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching, pupil services, and administration. Initial licensing is based on an educator's successful performance as measured against these standards. Continuing licensure is based upon evidence of continued growth in these standards through a professional development plan. Special education teachers who meet the standards under PI 34 are considered highly qualified. For a complete set of rules, resources, and guidance, see the Teacher Education, Professional Development, and Licensing Team web page dpi.wi.gov/tepdl/index.html.

The Wisconsin Educational Services Program-Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WESP-DHH) outreach program has continued in providing the staff development opportunities to keep staff current with latest practices and technology. A Summer Institute for Educators of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students has been offered through

Number of Emergency Licenses Issued

	'99-'00	'00-'01	'01-'02	'02-'03	'03-'04
Hearing Impairment	10	7	3	10	15
Early Childhood Special Education	51	64	57	71	60
Cognitive Disability	126	169	159	160	178
Specific Learning Disability	278	373	418	387	341
Speech/Language Impairment	39	25	23	20	19
Visual Impairment	7	0	3	8	12
Emotional Behavioral Disability	394	430	449	452	413
Cross Categorical	N.A.	N.A.	69	144	195
Total	905	1068	1181	1252	1233

DPI since 2001. These for-credit courses, along with workshops provided throughout the school year, have been both cutting edge and responsive to the requests of staff including teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, educational interpreters, educational audiologists, and speech and language pathologists who work with students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Paraprofessional Training and Professional Development

Addressing Objective 3.3

Special education paraprofessionals maintain an essential role in Wisconsin's schools. During the 2003-2004 school year, approximately 7,750 special education paraprofessionals were employed by Wisconsin school districts. The department requires that all special education paraprofessionals obtain a SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AIDE LICENSE (PI 34.34 (18)) to assist students with disabilities. The Special Education Team has continued to support special education paraprofessional training and professional development opportunities through the Wisconsin Special Education Paraprofessional Training Grant. The Wisconsin Paraprofessional Workgroup, which consists of collaborative partners including

the CESAs, technical colleges and universities, school districts, Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), and other professional educational associations, provides ongoing support and direction for the grant activities and works toward increasing paraprofessional access to various statewide training events. Grant activities included two regional conferences, the CESA 4 Wisconsin Paraprofessional website, the Paraprofessional Training Materials Lending Library, and the quarterly *Para Post* newsletter. The regional training events hosted over 350 paraprofessionals as well as teachers and administrators.

Data Retreats

Addressing Objectives 3.4

Data retreats have long been recognized as an important tool for educators in the analysis of data and the use of this data to improve programs and services for students. In collaboration with CESA 7, DPI developed Special Education Data Retreats to bring LEA teams together to analyze their special education data and focus on outcomes for students with disabilities. CESA Regional Service Network Directors have collaborated with CESA School Improvement Services Directors in piloting a Special Education Data Retreat within each of the 12 CESAs in Wisconsin. These pilots have greatly increased the participation rate of special educators in learning how to analyze special education data, as well as including special

education data in overall school improvement efforts. During the 2004-2005 school year, with support through an IDEA discretionary grant, each of the 12 CESAs participated in a train-the-trainer workshop in November. Following this training, each of the 12 CESAs organized at least one pilot site for a Special Education Data Retreat, which focused primarily on the analysis of special education data. To date, 121 special education and 132 general educators have participated in data retreats designed primarily to analyze special education data. Persons wishing to learn more about participating in a data retreat should contact their CESA Regional Service Network (RSN) Director.

State Special Education Eligibility Criteria

Addressing Objective 3.5

In November 1996, the Department of Public Instruction held 12 informational hearings throughout the state relating to special education requirements under Chapter PI 11, Wisconsin Administrative Code. As a result of testimony presented at those hearings, the state superintendent appointed six task forces to develop criteria determining the need for special education services and to modify eligibility criteria relating to cognitive disabilities (CD), visual impairments (VI), hearing impairments (HI), speech/language impairments (S/L), specific learning disabilities (SLD), and emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD).

As a result of the task force recommendations and further hearings, new rules revising eligibility criteria in six areas went into effect July 1, 2001. The department disseminated information and provided technical assistance on eligibility requirements throughout the state by posting eligibility criteria implementation material on the DPI website, conducting workshops for school personnel and parents in CESAs and at relevant conferences such as the Annual State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education and Pupil Services Leadership Issues and provide training at program support teacher meetings.

As required by PI 11.37, DPI issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) and contracted with a research team from University of Wisconsin (UW)-Oshkosh to conduct a study on the impact of the revised eligibility criteria. An interim report was issued in July 2003, with a final report sent to the Wisconsin legislature on June 20, 2005. Researchers presented to a variety of professional groups, as appropriate, throughout the process. The final report is posted on the DPI website, dpi.wi.gov/sped/doc/eligfinrpt.doc, as is the executive summary dpi.wi.gov/sped/doc/eligexesum.doc.

Goal 4:

Collaborative Partnerships

Students with disabilities will have a foundation for learning and successful transitions enhanced by collaborative partnerships among families, schools, and communities.

Objectives

4.1 Collaboration among parents, regular and special educators, related service providers, and all administrators in areas of school governance and the development of quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in a consensus-based manner will increase.

4.2 Collaboration with postsecondary educational institutions and service agencies will increase.

4.3 Collaboration among early intervention, childcare, Head Start, and school early childhood programs will increase system level partnerships.

Parent Partnerships Create a Firm Foundation

Addressing Objective 4.1

Special Education Plan Parent Involvement Data Comparison 2000-01 to 2004-05

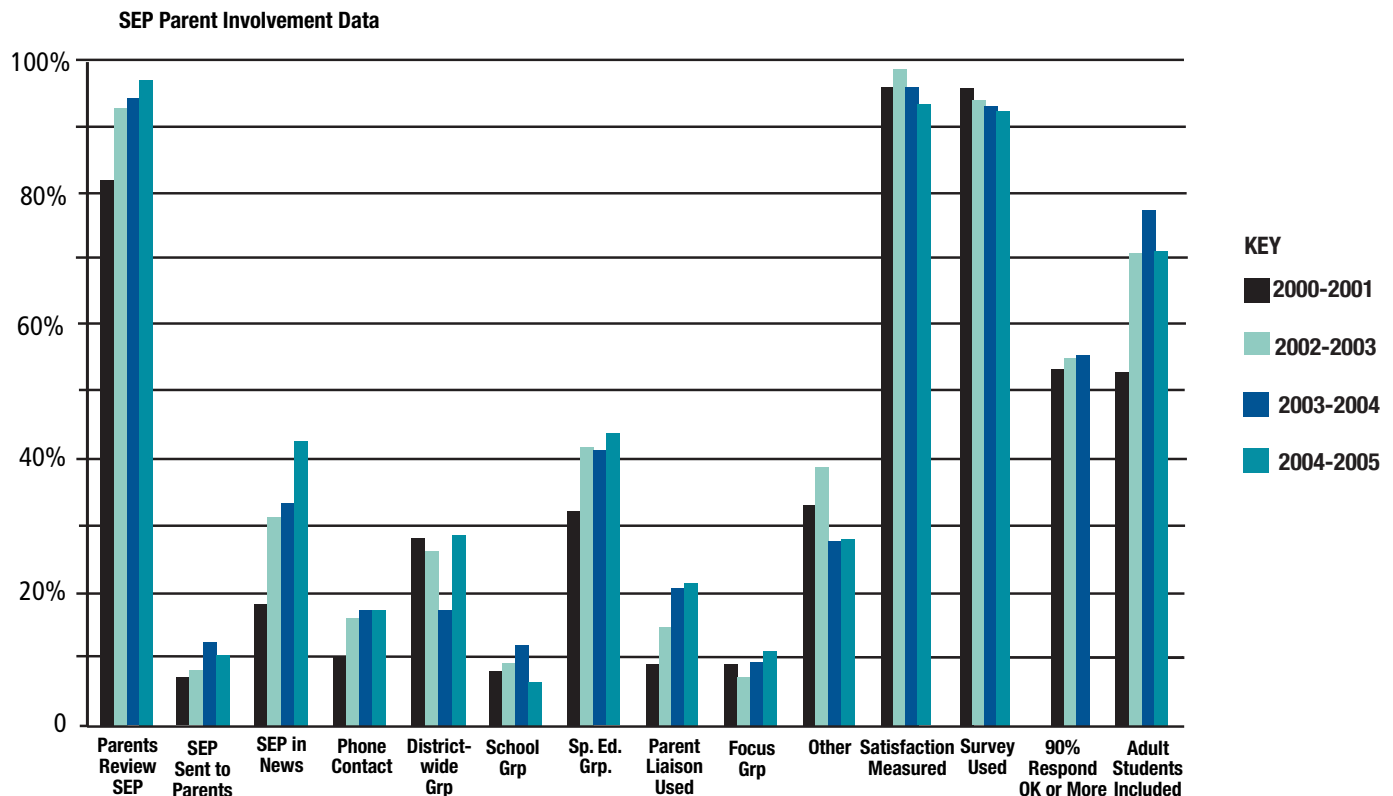
Four years of data about parent involvement in Wisconsin school districts was gathered from district special education plans (SEP) between 2000 and 2005. Because of changes that occurred in the required content of the SEP during 2001-02, data from that period is not included below. The number of districts reporting that parents participated in the development and review of the SEP increased in each successive school year:

2000-2001	82% of all districts
2002-2003	93% of all districts
2003-2004	94% of all districts
2004-2005	97% of all districts

The methods most commonly used to increase parent participation in the review of the SEP include:

- Publishing SEP information in a newsletter or newspaper – 43% in 2004-05, up from 18% in 2000-01
- Participation in a special education advisory council or group – 44% in 2004-05, up from 32% in 2000-01
- Using a parent liaison - 21% in 2004-05, up from 9% in 2000-01

Collaboration among school staff and parents is an integral component of developing IEPs. Parent and adult satisfaction with special education services may be one reflection of the level of



Special Education Plan Parent Involvement Data Comparison 2000-01 to 2004-05 (cont'd)

collaboration that occurs. Since 2000, a high percentage of districts have collected data on parent and adult student satisfaction with special education services. The number of districts that report using a survey for this purpose has declined slightly but remains above 90%. For the last three years, over half of these districts voluntarily reported at least a 90% satisfaction rate. Since the DPI did not require districts to report the percentage rate, this rate represents those who chose to include it and not necessarily all those districts who had a high satisfaction rate. In the future, however, OSEP and the federal government will require LEAs to report information from parents about district's efforts to involve parents in their children's education.

Purposeful relationships between family members and school staff, characterized by common understandings and shared-decision making, support student learning. Twenty years of research shows that bringing families into the school is not enough; school staff need to initiate efforts to build a trusting relationship with families so they can work as a team to meet student needs. The development of district parent liaisons and district parent advisory committees has been shown to be an effective way for Wisconsin districts to support such relationships. The Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Education Initiative (WSPEI), the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI-FACETS), and the Native American Family Empowerment Center continue to be available to help districts improve services and results for children with disabilities by facilitating parent involvement.

Collaboration with Postsecondary Educational Institutions Addressing Objective 4.2

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and the DPI have been charged with ensuring that Wisconsin's teachers are "highly qualified" and prepared to meet the unique needs of all students. Wisconsin's statutes echo these federal laws, requiring teachers to have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be proficient in each of the ten teacher standards contained in PI 34.02. Standard #3 specifies that teachers "understand how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities."

With these federal and state mandates as a catalyst, the Special Education Team and the Teacher Education, Professional Development, and Licensing Team forged a partnership with IHE representatives during the 2004-05 academic year to explore Wisconsin's practices in meeting these requirements. This collaboration resulted in a DPI-hosted statewide forum for general and special education IHE faculty. The over arching goal is to provide faculty participants with an opportunity to examine current practice in preparing general and special education teachers in Wisconsin's schools to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities within the regular education environment and general education curriculum. Emphasis will be placed on developing statewide replicable models for pre service training programs.

Collaboration Among Early Intervention, Child Care, Head Start and School Early Childhood Programs

Addressing Objective 4.3

Early childhood collaboration continues to expand among early intervention, childcare, Head Start, school kindergarten programs, and school early childhood programs. Consultants from DPI, the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and a wide variety of early childhood associations collaborate through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) initiative. This includes networking with the Maternal Child Health Comprehensive Systems Change Grant and the state's new Strengthening Families Initiative.

Early childhood stakeholders were involved in the development of, and continue to play a significant role, in Wisconsin's State Improvement Grant (SIG). Collaboration and newly expanded partnerships include:

- The partnership among the Early Childhood Transition and Preschool Options Projects, WI-FACETS, WSPEL, and Birth to 3 agencies resulted in the development of a PowerPoint and presentations at regional meetings and leadership conferences. A training initiative, "Ready, Set, Go... Transitions and Options," was developed by this collaboration.
- Collaboration among early childhood special education teacher training programs has focused on mini-grants to the University of Wisconsin UW-Milwaukee, UW-Whitewater, and UW-Eau Claire (for collaborative work with UW-River Falls). The first collaborative course is an assessment course between UW-Milwaukee and UW-Stevens Point. Expansions to these collaborations include work that brings the Wisconsin Technical Colleges, the UW system and other universities to work in partnership on mini-grant activities.
- Collaboration among early childhood special education, childcare, and Head Start has expanded through participation in WECCP, cross-department development of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS), and professional development initiatives. Three WECCP video conferences have been presented, addressing relevant special education topics. The Professional Development Initiative is being redesigned to incorporate a more comprehensive focus including an expansion to allied health professionals.

- Collaboration between early childhood special education and kindergarten programming focuses on efforts related to the expansion of four-year-old kindergarten. Activities have included braided funding to hire six community collaboration coaches and co-sponsorship of the Preserving Early Childhood (four-year-old kindergarten) conference.
- The unique needs of young children who are English language learners and of those who are homeless have prompted collaborations within the DPI (across divisions) and with professional community representatives. Specific training has been coordinated and provided statewide.
- The DPI, DWD, and the DHFS worked collaboratively to develop training on the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. A statewide 'train the trainers' event provided leadership training and materials to nearly 80 professionals who have, in turn, provided training at local and regional levels.
- Collaboration among grant projects (SIG and preschool IDEA discretionary grants) have provided shared information and expanded focus in the areas of community planning, networks and councils, personnel development and family training, and the provision of special education and related services in integrated settings.
- Projects, programs, and services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing have linked with multiple state agencies and parent groups to provide comprehensive service to families and children. There has been an ongoing link with the Wisconsin Sound Beginnings Project and the Birth to 3 programs run through the DHFS. Waisman Center has been a central player in supporting training for resources to families, county Birth to 3 programs, and districts for more than four years. Linkages continue with the five interpreter preparation programs in the state in collaborating on training needs of educational interpreters working in our PK-12 programs. Ongoing conversations occur to address the continual need for training, initial competency, and ongoing professional development of these service providers.

Please visit the following websites for examples of local, regional, and state level collaboration:

collaboratingpartners.com

wisconsinsig.org/ideaec/ideaecindex.htm

Next Steps

State Performance Plan

The State Improvement Plan for Children with Disabilities (SIP) was a five-year plan which began in December 1999. The State Performance Plan (SPP) is the state's new six-year improvement plan which was submitted on December 2, 2005, to the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Washington D.C. The SPP is mandated by the IDEA 2004. The DPI must monitor local school districts in three priority areas (see below) as well as measure and report performance on 20 indicators of progress (e.g., graduation rates, performance on statewide assessments, and educational environments).

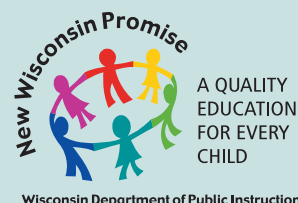
Priorities:

1. Provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
2. State exercise of general supervisory authority.
3. Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services.

Congress expects the SPP to be developed with broad stakeholder input and public dissemination. To that end, DPI has involved the Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System Stakeholder group in the process. The stakeholders have helped set the six-year goals and annual targets for the indicators. The DPI must submit an Annual Performance Report to OSEP on the progress the state is making toward the goals and targets. The primary focus of federal and state monitoring activities is on improving education results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities while ensuring the requirements of IDEA are met. The SPP will enable the DPI to continue working collaboratively with parents, educators, and community members to make data-based decisions about how to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information about special education in Wisconsin, please visit the DPI website at dpi.wi.gov.
- If you would like to obtain a copy of the State Improvement Plan for Children With Disabilities, contact the Special Education Team at the DPI or download a copy from the team website at dpi.wi.gov/dpi/dlsea/en/sip.html.
- You can also visit the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) website through the department's home page. This electronic resource has been created to help educators, parents, and community members who have an interest in educating the minds and hearts of all children. Sections labeled Standards and Assessment, Data Analysis, Continuous School Improvement, and Best Practices guide users to key local, state, and national information about success in education.



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Madison, Wisconsin

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